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From: CLRInfo
Sent: April 16, 2021 8:27 AM
To: Ken McCormack
Cc: Maria Sushkova
Subject: COVID-19 Update - April 16

Importance: High

[CLR Members,](#)

Please find important updates on the COVID-19 situation.

[Provincial update](#)

COVID-19 variants are driving virus transmission to the point where the province could see 3,000 new cases per day, if trends continue.

New [provincial modelling](#) shows even if social gatherings drop off over the next few weeks, B.C. would still be on track to hit 2,000 new cases a day.

The province has restrictions in place banning social gatherings, events and indoor dining, but so far the province's "circuit-breaker" has not driven cases down.

The Fraser Health region continues to drive transmission. The modelling shows the health authority could see 1,500 cases per day by the end of April if indoor social contacts remain consistent.

Surrey continues to be one of the key COVID hotspots in the province. The average daily rate of cases in the city is around 46 new cases per 100,000 people. Abbotsford is the second highest hot spot in Fraser Health, with 35 new cases per 100,000 population. Anything over 20 out of 100,000 is noted as a hot spot by the province.

Variants now make up an estimated 65% of all new COVID cases in the province. The P.1 variant, first detected in Brazil, now makes up 49% of the province's variant cases. The B.1.1.7 variant, originally detected in the U.K., makes up 50% of the variant cases.

On Wednesday, the independent [BC COVID-19 Modelling Group](#) released its own modelling. The contributors to the report include UBC mathematical biologist Sally Otto, Dean Karlen from UVic and TRIUMF, Caroline Colijn from SFU and Jens von Bergmann from MountainMath.

The independent modelling found the growth of variants of concern (B.1.1.7 and P.1) have driven recent rise in cases and transmission must be reduced by at least 40% to control case growth.

The researchers also found hospitalization numbers are projected to rise above capacity in May, unless virus transmission is brought under control and that the vaccination program needs to target those with the most contacts so that infection and hospitalization rates can be reduced over the next two to three months.

For the April 15, 2021, provincial modelling presentation, visit: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/modelling-projections>.

[B.C. restaurants, industrial workplaces and gyms among biggest COVID-19 cluster sites](#)

Data released by the B.C. government shows how many cases of COVID-19 spread in workplaces and the impact a workplace cluster can have on the surrounding community.

The data, released Thursday, looked at the two biggest health regions in the province: Vancouver Coastal Health and Fraser Health.

In Coastal Health, restaurants, bars and lounges were by far the sites of the biggest clusters in February and March, with clusters detected at 70 businesses that resulted in 155 cases. In Fraser Health, however, industrial and manufacturing businesses had the biggest outbreaks.

The province shared data from Feb. 1 to April 12:

About 60 industrial and manufacturing companies had outbreaks that were responsible for about 450 cases.

Restaurants, bars and lounges came next with 50 sites responsible for about 275 cases. About 45 fitness centres and gyms had outbreaks in that time period, but resulted in more cases at just under 350.

Office buildings and retail, maintenance and trades businesses made up the rest of the top five in the region.

In an effort to decrease workplace transmission, Fraser Health showed how just one employee who tested positive for COVID-19 can affect their coworkers.

Based on an actual case, one person with the virus resulted in 48 positive cases at an industrial worksite. Seven people then tested positive after interacting with those 48 people. One worker was admitted to the hospital. Forty-six households in total were affected and 111 people had to self-isolate without going to school or work. Finally, four additional worksites were put at risk, including a car dealership, a medical clinic, a lumber mill and a processing plant.

[State of emergency extended to continue B.C.'s COVID-19 response](#)

The Province of British Columbia has formally extended the provincial state of emergency, allowing health and emergency management officials to continue to use extraordinary powers under the Emergency Program Act (EPA) to support the Province's COVID-19 pandemic response.

The state of emergency is extended through the end of the day on [April 27, 2021](#).

The extension of the provincial state of emergency is based on recommendations from B.C.'s health and emergency management officials. The original declaration was made on March 18, 2020, the day after Dr. Bonnie Henry, B.C.'s provincial health officer (PHO), declared a public health emergency.

The Province continues, with the support of police and other enforcement officials, to use measures under the EPA to limit the spread of COVID-19, including issuing tickets for owners, operators and event organizers who host an event or gathering contravening the PHO's orders.

On July 10, 2020, the COVID-19 Related Measures Act came into force, enabling provisions created for citizens and businesses in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to continue as needed should the provincial state of emergency end.

Learn More:

For information on all recent orders and guidance, as well as general COVID-19 information, visit:

www.gov.bc.ca/covid19

For more information and latest medical updates on COVID-19, visit the BC Centre for Disease Control website:

<http://www.bccdc.ca/>

[Health Canada provides update on safety review of AstraZeneca and COVISHIELD COVID-19 vaccines](#)

Apr 14, Health Canada released an update on its ongoing safety review of rare events of blood clots associated with low levels of blood platelets following immunization with the AstraZeneca and COVISHIELD COVID-19 vaccines.

After a thorough, independent assessment of the currently available scientific data, Health Canada has concluded that these very rare events may be linked to use of the vaccine. This is in line with the findings of other regulators. As a result, the Department has updated warnings in the product information of the possible side effects and to provide information about the signs and symptoms and when to seek prompt medical attention following vaccination.

Based on the review of available data from Europe and from the U.K. and AstraZeneca, no specific risk factors have been identified. Therefore, Health Canada is not restricting the use of the vaccine in any specific populations at this time.

Health Canada's position that the safety of the AstraZeneca vaccine meets its safety standards remains valid, and the Department is adjusting the product's labelling to reflect the available scientific evidence. The results of the ongoing safety assessments have been consistent. The potential risk of these events is rare, and the benefits of the vaccine in protecting against COVID-19 outweigh its potential risks.

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) is also reviewing the available information to determine whether to maintain or modify its current recommendation not to use the vaccine in people under 55.

As the COVID-19 vaccine rollout advances in Canada, Health Canada will continue to monitor the use of all COVID-19 vaccines closely and examine and assess any new safety concerns.

For further information on COVID-19 vaccines authorized by Health Canada, including post-market updates, please visit [Health Canada's COVID-19 vaccines and treatments portal](#).

[Government of Canada establishes Critical Drug Reserve to bolster Canada's supply of drugs used to treat COVID-19](#)

Apr 14, Minister of Health Patty Hajdu announced the establishment of a **Critical Drug Reserve**, an additional safety net of key drugs used in the treatment of COVID-19 symptoms.

Canada is procuring an initial 3-month supply of [12 drugs](#). The reserve targets the drugs that hospitals rely on most to treat patients who are critically ill with COVID-19, and are at risk of shortage. In selecting which drugs to procure, the Department looked at Canada's experience with COVID-19 to date, as well as advice from the provinces and territories and critical care health experts.

Health Canada established the reserve with provinces and territories and other partners. The Critical Drug Reserve complements other federal, provincial and territorial drug shortage management efforts, and functions as a safety net by augmenting the supply of key drugs used in treating patients with COVID-19 in Canada.

[WorkSafeBC: Public health orders: April 13 update](#)

The provincial health officer has revised an order regarding industrial camps, and has issued a new order for industrial projects within the Northern Health Authority Region.

Please ensure that you have reviewed and are following the requirements of these orders:

- Revised [order](#) regarding industrial camps
- [New order](#) for industrial projects within the Northern Health Authority Region

You may also wish to review WorkSafeBC protocols for [Construction](#).

[StrongerBC program creates new jobs, opportunities](#)

The Province is providing more than 5,000 youth and young adults across British Columbia with access to skills training and jobs through the almost \$45-million **StrongerBC Future Leaders Program**.

The Program provides youth and young adults with training, internships, job co-ops and jobs in the growing tech sector, environment and natural resource fields. Four B.C. ministries will invest in this initiative, including the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation, the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy and the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training.

During the pandemic, youth unemployment peaked at 29%, over 15 percentage points above the provincial average.

The Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation is investing \$22 million to fund a minimum of 4,500 training spots and paid internships in two programs, in partnership with Innovate BC and the Digital Technology Supercluster.

The Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development will invest more than \$11 million for over 220 jobs in the Natural Resource Youth Employment program and the Recreation Sites and Trails program.

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy is creating opportunities for up to 180 young people to help tackle marine debris and plastic pollution in coastal communities. An investment of \$5 million in the Clean Coast, Clean Waters program is aimed at youth employment, including youth in Indigenous communities.

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy will invest \$4 million to create 37 positions with BC Parks and 46 positions with the Conservation Officer Service.

The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training has invested \$1 million into Mitacs for key internal program placements. Mitacs is a national not-for-profit organization that builds partnerships between undergraduate and graduate student researchers, post-secondary institutions, industry, other not-for-profit organizations and communities. The internships will focus on addressing challenges in the sectors that include health, technology and others.

Learn More:

To learn more about the StrongerBC Future Leaders Program, visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/economic-recovery/youth>

To learn more about the Innovate BC Innovator Skills Initiative, visit: <https://innovatebc.ca/what-we-offer/get-funding/student-hiring-grant/>

To learn more about the Digital Supercluster Canadian Tech Talent Accelerator, visit: <https://www.digitalsupercluster.ca/canadian-tech-talent-accelerator/>

To learn more about Mitacs, visit: <https://www.mitacs.ca/en>

For more information on StrongerBC, visit: <https://strongerbc.gov.bc.ca/>

Canada gains 300,000 jobs in March

Canada gained 303,000 jobs in March, a 1.6% increase from February, marking the second straight month of increase in employment numbers in the country, according to Statistics Canada. This follows an increase of 259,000 (1.4%) jobs in February.

Job gains are biggest in wholesale and retail trade (91,800 or 3.3%); information, culture and recreation (61,500 or 9.4%); health care and social assistance (46,800 or 1.9%); educational services (35,000 or 2.4%), construction (25,700 or 1.8%), accommodation and food services (21,400 or 2.4%).

Increases in manufacturing (8,200 or 0.5%); natural resources (7,000 or 2.2%); professional, scientific and technical services (5,900 or 0.4%); agriculture (2,500 or 1.0%); and finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing (1,100 or 0.1%) are smaller in comparison.

Meanwhile, transportation and warehousing (-7,300 or -0.7%), public administration (-4,700 or -0.5%), utilities (-100 or -0.1%) recorded decreases.

The unemployment rate fell by 0.7 percentage points to 7.5% in March, the lowest since February 2020.

Variations by age, region

Both full-time (175,000 or 1.2%) and part-time (128,000 or 3.9%) employment increased, finds the government. Employment among youth aged 15 to 24 rose by 115,000 (5%) in March, with gains entirely in part-time work.

Compared with February 2020, employment was down 122,000 (9.5%) among young women, compared with 39,000 (3%) among young men.

Among the provinces, the biggest winner is Ontario (182,300 or 2.5%). Coming in second is Alberta (37,100 or 1.7%) followed by British Columbia (35,000 or 1.3%), Quebec (25,900 or 0.6%) and Newfoundland and Labrador (13,400 or 6.5%).

Provincial stats

The information below is current as of 2pm on Thursday, April 15, 2021:

- New cases: 1,205

- Total cases: 116,075
- Deaths in last 24 hours: 3
- Total deaths: 1,524
- Total recoveries: 104,331 (90%)

Stay safe.

Ken McCormack | President & CEO

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